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The situation in the Middle East

Letter dated 7 December 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement on the Middle East peace process by the Presidency of the European Union issued on 4 December 1998 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and of its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 40.

(Signed) Ernst **Sucharipa**
Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations

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Annex

[Original: English and French]

Statement on the Middle East peace process, issued on 4 December 1998 by the Presidency of the European Union

The European Union strongly supports the Wye Memorandum as a welcome step forward in the peace process, and welcomes the implementation of the first phase of the Memorandum by both sides.

The European Union believes it is essential that further implementation proceeds in good faith and in accordance with the timeline established at Wye.

The European Union is therefore greatly concerned by the recent announcement by the Government of Israel that it will not proceed with further implementation unless the Palestinians give additional assurances which go beyond the Wye Memorandum.

An important achievement of the Wye Memorandum was to establish a series of measures to address both sides' legitimate security concerns. In that context, the European Union deplores the recent violence between Israelis and Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, which can only damage confidence in both communities. The right response is for both sides to exercise restraint both in their actions and in their public statements. It is not an appropriate response to introduce new conditions for the implementation of the Wye Memorandum.

The European Union, therefore, stresses the need for the obligations in the Wye Memorandum to be fulfilled as signed.